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COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Twenty-eighth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 22nd MEETING

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 14 May 2002, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. BONOAN-DANDAN

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES ARISING IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS (agenda item 3) (continued)

Joint meeting with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on follow-up to the day of general discussion on the right to education (art. 13 of the Covenant) and to the World Education Forum

1. The CHAIRPERSON said that the Committee, as a follow-up to its general day of discussion on the right to education and the World Education Forum, would hear the views of United Nations agencies, bodies and programmes, and of non-governmental organizations.

2. Owing to its function as a monitoring body, the Committee had a singular opportunity to examine closely the manner in which States took not only legislative but also practical steps for the implementation of the right to education, as set out in articles 13 and 14 of the Covenant. The Committee had issued General Comments Nos. 11 and 13 to elaborate on those rights.

3. When States drew up their reports, they did so by following the Committee's guidelines, which had last been revised some 12 years earlier. As the Committee was engaged in updating them, it would have the opportunity to incorporate references to the World Education Forum. It could, for instance, request that States in their initial reports describe the programmes, administrative measures and policies adopted pursuant to the Forum, including their national Education for All (EFA) plans of action, and could ask them in subsequent reports to enter into a dialogue with the Committee on their implementation.

4. The Dakar Framework for Action stated that the heart of EFA activity lay at the country level. The same could be said of the Covenant. International instruments were meaningless unless they were given significance at the national level.

5. The Committee issued concluding observations at the end of its consideration of each country's report. The concluding observations did not represent the final word, but, rather, a link to the next report, thus ensuring the continuation of the Committee's dialogue with the State party. In the interim, national plans of action had time to produce tangible results. The Committee, in its concluding observations, could urge States to seek technical cooperation from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and could refer not only to articles 13 and 14 of the Covenant but also to the Dakar Framework for Action and EFA.

6. Mr. MALEMPRÉ (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) said that the holding of the joint meeting was a landmark event in the cooperation between the Committee and UNESCO. UNESCO had previously worked with the Committee in the drafting of General Comment No. 13, and the Committee had taken part in a dialogue with the UNESCO Committee on Conventions and Recommendations at the 161st session of UNESCO's Executive Board. A joint expert group comprising representatives of UNESCO and the Committee was in the process of being established.

7. The World Education Forum had set six major objectives: to expand and improve early childhood care and education; to ensure that all children had access to free and compulsory primary education of good quality by 2015; to ensure equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes for all; to improve adult literacy by 50 per cent by 2015; to achieve gender equality in education by 2015; and to improve every aspect of the quality of education, with special attention to literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

8. The Director-General of UNESCO had pointed to the need to share insights and ideas about how best to meet the challenges of EFA. International action in support of national implementation was indispensable for the realization of the right to education. It was gratifying to note that follow-up to the Forum figured systematically in the Committee's dialogues with States.

9. Two years after the Forum, the responsibility of Governments to provide basic education for all had been recognized by a number of international agencies. The sheer size and complexity of that challenge had also been recognized. UNESCO had drawn up an international strategy in pursuance of EFA in order to help countries meet the EFA challenge effectively. The current joint meeting reflected the need for effective partnerships and coordinated efforts.

10. One of the major issues to be tackled involved the strengthening of monitoring systems at the national level, incorporating a rights-based approach. At the international level, UNESCO looked forward to benefiting from the Committee's experience in incorporating a rights-based approach in future annual monitoring reports on EFA.

11. It was of prime importance to see how the legal obligations of States in respect of the right to education were reflected in national legal systems. How could the legal basis for the right to education be strengthened so as to make education accessible to all, without discrimination or exclusion? In a globalized world, allowing a situation to persist where there were educational "haves" and "have-nots" would not only be unacceptable but dangerous.

12. Mr. PILLAY said that it was clear from a comparison of the Dakar Framework for Action and the Covenant that the political commitments undertaken under the former were also legal obligations under the latter. The mention of the responsibility of the national Government to respect the right to education that figured in the Dakar Framework for Action was not required in the Covenant because the latter automatically entailed legal obligations.

13. Mr. SADI asked what mechanisms were envisaged for the regular monitoring of progress in the implementation of EFA. Were there plans to send visiting delegations to examine the situation in each country? He was not so sure that the Dakar Framework for Action was a uniquely political document that did not entail legal obligations. What was the interpretation of UNESCO in that regard?

14. While it was true that human rights education was not being pursued everywhere, in those places where it had been incorporated into the school curriculum the results had been disappointing. In many countries there had even been a surge of discrimination, racism and intolerance. What accounted for the lack of effectiveness of efforts at human rights education?

15. Mr. GRISSA said that education should be considered not only from the legal perspective but also as an economic factor. Long ago the economist Theodore Schultz had pointed to the extreme economic importance of education. Education was not a form of consumption, but a productive investment. It was very surprising that certain States chose not to invest in education, instead opting for short-term rewards. The biggest difference between the least developed countries and those that had succeeded in development could be seen in the amounts invested in education. No investment had a more powerful equalizing effect.

16. The Government of Tunisia had once reduced education subsidies in order to subsidize the provision of bread and public services, with the result that the country had been literally eating its future. The Committee should dwell not so much on the legal obligation of countries to educate their children, but rather on their economic interest in doing so.

17. Mr. MARCHÁN ROMERO noted that the focus of the Dakar Framework for Action and the documents submitted by UNESCO was on the legal obligations of States and the policies they must carry out in respect of those obligations. Yet there was no mention of integrating a practical human rights component into primary and secondary education programmes. Education was of the utmost importance to the full development of the human person. It was therefore imperative that children should learn about the role education could play as an instrument of human rights.

18. Mr. WIMER ZAMBRANO said that in the past international agencies had underscored the importance of education as an economic investment, but that they had apparently ceased doing so. Why had UNESCO stopped emphasizing the economic benefits of investment in education?

19. Mr. SFEIR-YOUNIS (World Bank) said that the cost of financing Education for All programmes in the 47 countries that accounted for the majority of children not receiving an education was estimated at $2.5 billion a year between 2002 and 2015. The World Bank, which was the largest funding agency for education programmes, took an approach based on four broad elements: resource mobilization, knowledge generation and dissemination, capacity-building and institutional strengthening. Reaching the goals of an EFA programme was not a purely educational problem: factors such as economic growth and infrastructure also influenced the effectiveness of education programmes. Research by the Bank had shown that at least 35 countries were unlikely to meet the goal of eliminating gender disparities at the primary level by 2005 and that 30 countries would not reach the goal of providing universal primary education unless they enjoyed historically unprecedented rates of economic and social progress. To reach that goal, countries would need to make effective use of domestic resources, focus on educational quality and take specific action to make schooling accessible to the poor, the disadvantaged and girls. In the area of girls' education, the World Bank was a substantial lender and supported girls' education initiatives by providing technical support and building awareness of gender inequalities, targeting the 31 countries in which those inequalities were greatest in primary and secondary schools.

20. The obstacles to the realization of the right to education included the imposition of user fees: studies had shown that the abolition of such fees led to exponential increases in enrolment rates, although it was of course vital to find alternative sources of funding. The loss of teachers as a result of human immunodeficiency virus and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) was another serious problem for schools, but education itself was a powerful tool in preventing the spread of the epidemic. There were also many structural problems in the education system in countries suffering from armed conflicts, where particular attention needed to be paid to the reintegration of child soldiers.

21. At the political level, it was essential to make the connection between the right to education and the development goals agreed upon at the Millennium Assembly. Investment in education, which was at the root of empowerment and fundamental to development, must be accompanied by action in other critical areas of development such as health and nutrition. At the same time, EFA programmes must encompass non-formal education, and unresolved questions on the quality of education and how that quality was to be measured must be addressed.

22. Ms. MALUWA (Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS) said that success in combating HIV/AIDS was directly proportional to the degree to which human rights, including the right to education, were promoted and protected. Education could reduce the negative impact of AIDS by establishing the conditions that made HIV transmission less likely and by promoting preventive behaviour. However, the AIDS epidemic presented particular challenges to the education sector; in the countries most affected by it, the human resources base in the sector was being rapidly eroded and the number of students was falling. There was a need to create a supportive environment to facilitate access to education, to ensure that HIV/AIDS issues were fully taken into account in the education system and to enhance human rights education.

23. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), in cooperation with other United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations, had focused on training key national partners, including human rights and AIDS service organizations and political leaders. It worked especially closely with UNESCO, with which it had conducted regional training workshops in Asia and Africa. The areas covered in the training included discrimination in relation to HIV/AIDS, the rights of vulnerable populations, access to medication, gender equality and the prevention of mother-to-child transmission. UNAIDS focused on three priority areas to maximize the positive impact of education in reducing HIV/AIDS transmission: the provision of education for AIDS orphans and children who headed households or who had been displaced as a result of AIDS; the integration of AIDS education into non-formal education programmes; and the development of innovative education programmes for young girls.

24. Ms. PIGOZZI (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), responding to some of the points raised in the discussion, said that although the Dakar Framework for Action might not have the legal force of an international convention, it constituted a strong moral obligation for signatories and was a powerful instrument for change when used in conjunction with existing legal obligations. It was true that the Dakar Framework did not dwell on the argument that education was an excellent economic investment, perhaps because it was taken as a given by the drafters or because development had come to be seen in human rather than purely economic terms, but there was no shortage of strong evidence to support that argument. With regard to the discouraging results of attempts to integrate a human

rights perspective into education, UNESCO had reached the conclusion, which was embedded though perhaps not very clearly articulated in the Dakar Framework, that it was not enough simply to convey information about human rights: human rights had to be embodied and practised in the education system. On the question of HIV/AIDS in the context of the right to education, education systems must address the crisis in two ways: first, they must teach students about prevention and, second, they must be responsive to the needs of both the children affected by the disease, such as orphans, and those infected by it, to ensure there was no discrimination against them.

25. Mr. SINGH (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) said that the Dakar Framework for Action drew some legal force from references to it, or to its main points, in texts such as the UNESCO Constitution, in which States parties stated their belief in full and equal opportunities for education for all, and Commission on Human Rights resolution 2001/29, on the right to education. As far as investment in education was concerned, UNESCO compiled detailed statistics on it and took the view that education was a public good that should be adequately funded.

26. Mr. CEAUSU drew attention to the commitments in the Dakar Framework for Action to mobilize the necessary financial resources and address the problem of chronic underfunding in the education sector and contrasted those commitments with the reality in a country like Romania, where the educational infrastructure was crumbling, teaching materials were out of date, teachers' salaries were low and scholarships were disappearing. The problem was not a lack of resources per se, but the low priority given to education when resources were distributed and, above all, widespread corruption. The international institutions that provided funding for education, including the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and UNESCO, should attach conditions to their loans, as the European Union did, to force Governments to increase educational budgets and combat corruption.

27. Mr. SADI said that the Dakar Framework for Action could be taken as imposing legal obligations on signatories insofar as it was based on rights recognized in existing international instruments. The time was coming when the term "quality education" would have to be defined; too many education systems were transmitting doctrinaire ideas and values. He would be interested to know if the World Bank, which appeared to focus its attention on classical classroom methods, was contemplating investing in more modern and cost-effective teaching methods.

28. Mr. SFEIR-YOUNIS (World Bank) said it was important to have an absolutely clear idea about how education was financed. Although education was a private, as well as a public, good, there had been a move away from the collection of user fees, especially in the primary sector, presumably in the light of the right to education. Financing therefore had to be found largely from the public purse. On the one hand, Governments had to provide financing for capital projects such as the construction of new schools, while, on the other, they had to finance the cost of running the education system, including items such as teachers' salaries. To provide adequate financing for education many Governments faced a difficult choice between raising taxes, which was hard to do in the poorest countries because of their small tax base, and borrowing, which could lead to debt-servicing problems. One way to increase the effective use of available resources was to introduce greater transparency into the budget allocation process: experiments

had shown that if schools were told exactly how much they had been allocated, they were able to ensure they received the bulk of the amount allocated rather than the much smaller amounts they had received previously.

29. It was also important to see the amounts spent on education in perspective. For example, the cost of meeting EFA goals, at $2.5 billion a year, was paltry in comparison with the $800 billion a year spent on weapons worldwide or the $150 billion spent on alcoholic beverages in Europe alone. The allocation of resources was a political issue, and the World Bank was not in a position to attach strict conditions of the kind referred to by Mr. Ceausu to its loans; it had been made clear in no uncertain terms in recent years that it was not for the World Bank to dictate policy to sovereign States. Similarly, while corruption was a major problem and the Bank had a large number of projects dealing with it, States had to take the lead in combating corruption.

30. In reply to Mr. Sadi's question about more modern educational methods, he invited him to visit the World Bank to see for himself all the work the Bank was doing in the area of distance-learning. The Bank was making available millions of dollars' worth of satellite technology to reach even the most remote villages, allowing doctors in Africa, for example, to communicate instantaneously with colleagues in top universities around the world. Of course, a huge amount of investment in infrastructure would be necessary to make the most of modern educational methods, but much could be achieved by using available resources wisely.

31. Mr. RATTERE (International Labour Organization) said that the International Labour Organization (ILO) unreservedly supported efforts to ensure the right to education, especially those expended by UNESCO and its partners regarding the implementation of the Dakar Framework for Action. ILO had in recent years concentrated on three main areas: improving the status of teachers; the international programme on the elimination of child labour, focusing mainly on the linkage between the latter and education; and ensuring high-quality secondary education, particularly technical and vocational training, and its association with the world of work, including lifelong learning.

32. ILO's work on the status of teachers was conducted in close cooperation with UNESCO, in particular through the Joint ILO/UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers, which met every three years to review the status of teachers worldwide. The most recent example of the Joint Committee's efforts to broaden its cooperation with other international bodies had been the participation of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to education in its 2000 meeting, which would be repeated in the 2003 meeting.

33. He was heartened by the increasing attention paid by the specialized agencies and by national bodies to improving the status of teachers. Unless teachers' rights as enshrined in international labour standards were respected, there could be no basis for genuine partnership with Governments for attaining educational objectives. ILO's latest initiative in pursuit of EFA goals was a programme on the linkage between the quality of teachers and issues such as social dialogue. Teachers also had responsibilities, and the code of conduct set out in the Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers would be of interest to the Committee.

34. One approach could be to insist that States parties met a minimum standard of investment in education, perhaps 6 per cent of gross national product, as recommended by ILO. There were many issues that impeded attainment of such a goal, but it was important to set a benchmark and seek ways of obtaining the requisite resources for a high-quality education system.

Preparation, implementation and evaluation of the National Action Plans as provided for in the Dakar Framework for Action and their relation with the General Comments on articles 13 and 14 of the Covenant (E/C.12/2002/SA/3)

35. Ms. PIGOZZI (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) said that cooperation with the Committee on Education for All was extremely important. The Dakar Framework called upon countries to develop by the end of 2002 a national EFA plan that responded to the six goals set at Dakar. Education should fit into the larger development framework, and it was important to link national EFA plans to other planning instruments. Virtually all countries already had an education plan. Sectoral planning mechanisms, including poverty-reduction strategies, which covered all sectors, were also in place.

36. The Committee could assist UNESCO in several ways. It must be clearly understood that EFA was not only about primary education, but all types and levels of education. She therefore urged the Committee to encourage States parties to ensure that their periodic reports covered all aspects of education. The linkage between EFA plans and other planning mechanisms presented an opportunity to ensure that human rights were embedded in all educational planning instruments.

37. Other potential areas of cooperation were compulsory education and more effective participation by civil society in education planning. In some countries civil-society organizations were not allowed to operate with any degree of independence.

38. Mr. HUNT said that the ending of primary-school fees in some Sates parties, in conformity with article 13 of the Covenant, was a welcome development. Primary education must not be financed by the poor.

39. In paragraph 9 of the Dakar Framework all States were requested to develop or strengthen existing national EFA plans of action by the end of 2002. There was a striking convergence between that paragraph and article 14 of the Covenant, which also required free, compulsory primary education, to which the Committee had devoted its General Comment No. 11. The parallels were clear: both the Committee and UNESCO had experienced difficulty in extracting plans from States parties. UNESCO had recently adopted its Medium-Term Strategy 2002-2007, in which reference was made to support for member States in the development of legal instruments for promoting universal access to basic education. That echoed the Committee's pleas to States parties to enact legislation on the right to education pursuant to article 13 of the Covenant.

40. The Committee should continue to ask States parties about their EFA plans. It might ask them also to annex their EFA plans to their periodic reports; the Committee could then discuss the plans with reference to articles 13 and 14 of the Covenant and its General Comments Nos. 11 and 13. UNESCO could also provide the Committee with analyses of national EFA plans.

41. Such an approach would allow the Committee to ensure that its concluding observations reinforced the Dakar Framework and help States parties improve their implementation of articles 13 and 14. In fact the Committee, in its concluding observations on a number of countries, had stated its concerns regarding EFA plans, and its intention to support UNESCO in encouraging States to develop those plans as expeditiously as possible.

42. EFA plans could be scrutinized either by the joint expert group to be established with UNESCO or by the Committee itself during its dialogue with States parties. It might be helpful if the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Director-General of UNESCO, or the latter and the Committee, sent a joint letter to States urging them to prepare both their EFA plans and their article 14 plans as soon as possible.

43. Lastly, in the 1950s the drafters of the Covenant had envisaged that the specialized agencies would play a crucial role in its implementation, but in practice a joint approach had emerged only in the past few years - a development of enormous importance.

Preparation of UNESCO's Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the Dakar Framework of Action, and possible contribution by the Committee in developing a conceptual framework (E/C.12/2002/SA/4)

44. Ms. PIGOZZI (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) said that annual monitoring reports would indicate progress with regard to each of the six Dakar goals. While the international community had a role to play in monitoring, there was scant interest in investing resources in new international monitoring mechanisms; it was more practical to enhance existing mechanisms. One major player was the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, which was cooperating with a number of other agencies that regularly collected data on education.

45. As well as periodic reviews of progress, UNESCO envisaged making country visits. Each annual monitoring report might focus on a different aspect, such as gender parity, rights-based education or the quality of education. There was a clear interest in focusing on teachers as key players. If the Committee was in agreement, it would be useful to discuss how it might contribute to preparation of the reports.

46. Mr. RIEDEL said that the Committee was honoured to be able to contribute to UNESCO's vital work towards education for all. While the two bodies had different approaches, the Committee monitored the credibility of data provided by States parties on matters that were also of concern to UNESCO. It was very encouraging that the exemplary cooperation that the Committee had enjoyed with UNESCO over the past few years was also being developed with other agencies.

47. UNESCO might wish to use the Committee's General Comments No. 11 on article 14 of the Covenant and No. 13 on the right to education as a human rights checklist. He referred UNESCO to General Comment No. 13 with regard to general and specific legal obligations and minimum core obligations.

48. Mr. TEXIER said that it was all very well for countries to adopt a national action plan but, in order to assess how its recommendations had been followed up, the Committee needed to know exactly how the plans were implemented. Although Governments were primarily responsible for providing basic education for all, a commitment had been made to help developing countries to formulate and finance EFA strategies. The EFA partners were represented in most developing countries; it would be interesting to know what steps they had taken to help Governments to prepare their plans. Was it necessary to take a country-specific approach, or could a regional framework plan be used?

49. Mr. LEGRAND (European Association for Education Law and Policy) said that one of the major challenges faced by the European Union in the field of education was how to adapt its education system to the growing heterogeneity of European society. Measures had to be adopted to address the impact on education of the growing phenomenon of immigration. For example, there was a risk that some sectors of the immigrant population might be denied the right to education because of traditional practices such as forced or early marriage. As educational standards improved, it was important to ensure that the gap did not widen between young people who achieved higher levels of education and those who did not; it was essential to maintain the notion of equal access for all to education. Another challenge was the issue of juvenile delinquency, a problem in many European countries.

Constitutional provisions on the right to education and developing national legislation in keeping with government responsibilities under the Dakar Framework for Action (E/C/12/2002/SA/2)

50. Mr. SINGH (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) said that one of the key factors impeding the right to education was lack of legislation. The legal implications of the Dakar Framework for Action had been underlined at the World Education Forum. Many countries had drafted new legislation on the right to education, often after having consulted UNESCO. Case law could now be developed in those countries. For example, the Supreme Court of India had recently recognized that the right to education was a fundamental human right, in accordance with its obligations under the Covenant; the Constitution had since been amended accordingly and new legislation was to be developed. In Kenya, UNESCO was working with several other agencies to develop a legal basis for the right to education.

51. The Committee and UNESCO should analyse legislative developments affecting the right to education and encourage the development of national legislation. The Dakar Framework committed Governments to strengthening national and regional mechanisms to ensure that EFA was on the agenda of every national legislature. The Committee and UNESCO should also analyse constitutional changes introduced by Governments in keeping with their responsibilities under the Covenant and the Dakar Framework.

52. Mr. PILLAY said that it was essential to consider how States fulfilled their Covenant obligations with regard to education and translated their commitments under the Dakar Framework into practice. The requisite education policies must be adopted and the right to education made justiciable.

53. The Dakar Framework for Action and the Committee's General Comments Nos. 11 and 13 stated the elements that should be incorporated into national legislation: first, there should be non-discrimination and equal treatment; second, education must be accessible to all, especially the most vulnerable groups; third, temporary special measures were needed to bring about de facto equality for men and women and for disadvantaged groups; fourth, immediate measures should be taken to provide free and compulsory primary education for all; and, fifth, basic education should be provided for all. If a State party was unable to provide free, compulsory primary education, it was under a legal obligation to at least draw up a plan of action to ensure realization of that right.

54. There should be a mechanism to ensure that States parties complied with their minimum core obligations, which included access to public educational institutions on a non-discriminatory basis; ensuring that education conformed to the objectives set out in article 13 of the Covenant; the provision of primary education for all; implementation of a national education strategy; and a free choice of education without interference, subject to minimum educational standards. In other words, there were many elements to the right to education that could be enforced and could form the basis of legislation. It was not enough for a State to enshrine the right to education in its constitution; legislation to implement the right was essential. Education was, moreover, recognized as one of the best financial investments States could make.

55. Political will must be underpinned by resources. New financial resources, preferably in the form of grants and concessional assistance, must be mobilized to allow States parties to comply with their international obligations.

56. Mr. MALINVERNI said that in order to implement its responsibilities under the Dakar Framework the most important measure that could be taken by a State was to introduce a constitutional provision on the right to education. However, constitutional amendments often required complicated and lengthy procedures. Another solution would be to introduce appropriate legislation. An alternative solution would be to incorporate into the domestic legal order the relevant international conventions, thereby giving direct effect to the provisions contained in those instruments.

57. The advantages of having a constitutional provision were that a parameter would be set by which the State's legislation and policies could be measured, and that any violations could be brought before a constitutional court. Any constitutional provision should guarantee free, compulsory and adequate primary education. It was equally important to guarantee that public schools should be non-denominational. Parents should be able to choose whether their children had a private or a public education. Some attention should also be paid to the right of teachers to choose what they taught, as that constituted a right to freedom of expression. A State could also introduce a plan of action to ensure the right to education, which, while being less restrictive than a law, would allow targets to be set and results evaluated.

58. Mr. MALEMPRÉ (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) said that the EFA partners had made a commitment to work towards the implementation of the Dakar Framework for Action; they were working with the support of the international community and civil society to address the very different situations in various States parties.

59. As an intergovernmental organization, UNESCO could help to secure commitments from various parties and could help States to formulate national policies. It could also provide some help in training professionals. However, the task of ensuring the right to human and personal development ultimately remained the responsibility of each State. Lastly, it was important to take into account the fact that local authorities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society, the media and new technologies had an increasingly important role to play in the field of education.

60. The CHAIRPERSON said that she looked forward to discussing the role of the joint expert group, comprising representatives of the Committee and UNESCO, at a later date; the group would strengthen the cooperation between the two bodies in the implementation of the next phase of the Dakar Framework for Action.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.